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**Meeting Minutes**  
**Inter-agency Food & Nutrition Policy Advisory Council**

**DATE:** January 30, 2013

**TIME:** 3:00 PM

**LOCATION:** Department Operations Center, RI Department of Health

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:** Janet Coit, Director, Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Michael Fine, MD, Director, Department of Health (HEALTH), Richard Licht, Director, Department of Administration (DOA)

**AGENCY DESIGNEES:** Becky Bessette, Department of Education (RIDE), Michael Dahlquist, Department of Transportation (DOT), John Rogers, Food Service Director, Department of Corrections (DOC), John Scott, Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Catherine Taylor, Director, Department of Elderly Affairs (DEA), representing Department of Human Services (DHS), Maria Tocco, Office of the Lt. Governor, Michael Walker, Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

**ATTENDEES:** Angela Ankoma, HEALTH, Chris Ausura, HEALTH, Ken Ayars, DEM, Christina Batastini, Governor's Office, Sheila Brush, Grow Smart RI, RI Food Policy Council (RIFPC), Kimberly Clark, Farm Fresh RI, Perry Gast, HEALTH, Gemma Gorham, Brown University, RIFPC, David Heckman, HEALTH, Kathleen Heneghan, HEALTH, Eliza Lawson, HEALTH, Steve Morris, HEALTH, Jon Nunes, Newport Vineyards, Jennifer Olsen, HEALTH, Leo Pollock, Southside Community Land Trust, RIFPC, Nicole Pollock, DEM, Allison Rogers, DOA, Andrew Schiff, RI Food Bank, RIFPC, Tom Sproul, University of RI, Michelle Zheng, Brown University

1. Approval of September 30, 2013 meeting minutes
  - Dr. Fine, Council chair, called the meeting to order
  - Previous meeting minutes were unanimously approved
2. Public comments received
  - Sheila Brush from Grow Smart Rhode Island, also the policy chair for the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC), provided general information about the RIFPC including that a 2013 policy agenda will be made available soon and shared with Council members.
  - No other public comments received
3. White Paper report out
  - Nicole Pollock provided an update on the White Paper report and efforts across Council agencies to collect information on the RI State Food System including: production, processing, distribution, purchasing, marketing, retail, food waste recovery, and health & safety. She stated that this report will help inform a work plan for the Council and priority initiatives moving forward and that other agencies will need to be engaged to expand on initial results from this first paper.
  - A motion was made to conduct a special open meeting for Council members to review white paper results and recommendations. All Council members agreed

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unanimously to hold this meeting before March 30, when a report of Council activities is due to the General Assembly. Staff will convene this meeting and details will be posted on the Secretary of State's Open Meetings Page.

### 4. Food inventory status

- Eliza Lawson from HEALTH's Initiative for a Healthy Weight provided a brief presentation of preliminary results from the food inventory at meetings survey that was shared with directors at various state agencies and offices and reminded agency designees that the survey would be closing on Friday January 31<sup>st</sup>
- Presentation slides included in additional addendum materials

### 5. Presentations on the importance of the agriculture sector in Rhode Island and economic opportunities for farmers

- Janet Coit introduced Tom Sproul and John Nunes, invited to address Director Licht's previous request to learn more about the economics of farming in RI
- **Tom Sproul** – URI's resource economist elaborated on his research specific to the RI Agriculture Sector
  - Council members followed presentation with brief questions
  - Dr. Sproul speculates that food agriculture in RI makes up a much larger percentage of the state's agricultural sector than is currently projected from USDA data (closer to 70% versus USDA reporting of around 40%.) However, further studies would need to occur before confirming or denying the USDA projection.
  - Presentation slides included in additional addendum materials
- **John Nunes** – Rhode Island owner of Newport Vineyards painted a picture of a RI farm business and spoke from an owner and farmer's perspective.
  - Newport Vineyards is a family owned farm and the largest grower of grapes in New England
  - Officially opened in 1995 and went from 6 to 25 employees with an additional 20 now working in their bakery
  - Mr. Nunes supported the agriculture partnership's strategic plan as sound policy recommendations to support RI farmers, as well as supporting the inheritance tax and a decrease in regulation
  - Director Licht invited Mr. Nunes to sit down with DOA's head of regulatory reform to provide feedback on unnecessary regulation and stated that there may be interdepartmental opportunities to support RI businesses
  - Jon stated that it is a shame that only 1% or less of food consumed in the state is from RI - admits locally grown does cost more - but farmers need more state marketing for local.
  - Director Coit mentioned that the Governor's 2013 budget has included an allocation of \$100,000 to promote local agriculture and seafood business plans and marketing.
  - Director Coit proposed that an agenda item for an upcoming meeting should be that the Council establishes a goal to increase the percentage of food in RI that is locally grown.

### 6. Food & Nutrition Legislative / Policy updates from each department

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- The three legislative liaisons from HEALTH, DEM AND DOA provided updates on the following legislation:
    - S 0015 – An Act Relating to Food & Drugs -- Raw Milk
    - H 5135 – An Act Relating to Taxation -- Personal Income Tax
    - S 0054 – A Resolution Creating a Special Legislative Commission to Study the Diversion of Food Waste from the Central Landfill
    - S 0076 – An Act relating to Cities and Towns -- Zoning Ordinances
    - S 0018 – An Act Relating to Estate and Transfer Taxes
7. Adjournment (**1 minute**)
- Before adjourning the meeting, food & nutrition announcements were stated
  - Next regularly scheduled meeting date was announced as May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 PM.
    - Director Licht made a motion to move the May meeting to an earlier time because of the legislative schedule and all Council members agreed
  - Dr. Fine adjourned the meeting